On total domination and support vertices of a tree

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Abstract

The total domination number \( \gamma_t(G) \) of a simple, undirected graph \( G \) is the order of a smallest subset \( D \) of the vertices of \( G \) such that each vertex of \( G \) is adjacent to some vertex in \( D \). In this paper we prove two new upper bounds on the total domination number of a tree related to particular support vertices (vertices adjacent to leaves) of the tree. One of these bounds improves a 2004 result of Chellali and Haynes [1]. In addition, we prove some bounds on the total domination ratio of trees.

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1 Definitions and introduction

A subset \( D \) of the vertices of a graph \( G \) is a total dominating set if every vertex of the graph is adjacent to a vertex of \( D \) (this concept was introduced by Cockayne et al. in [3]). The total domination number of a graph \( G \) is the order of a smallest total dominating set, which we denote by \( \gamma_t(G) \). The total domination ratio of \( G \) is the ratio of the total domination number to the order of \( G \). Let \( T \) be a tree. A leaf of \( T \) is a vertex of degree 1 and a support vertex of \( T \) is a vertex adjacent to a leaf. By the isolated support vertices of \( T \) we mean the isolates (vertices of degree 0) of the subgraph induced by the support vertices of \( T \). A tree is said to be pruned if every support vertex is adjacent to exactly one leaf. Let \( X \) be a subset of the vertices of \( G \). The neighborhood of \( X \), denoted \( N(X) \), is the set of all vertices adjacent to some vertex in \( X \). The subgraph induced by \( X \) is denoted \( G[X] \).

The independence number of graph \( G \), denoted \( \alpha(G) \), is the order of a largest subset of vertices in which no two are adjacent. A vertex cover of a graph \( G \) is a subset of the vertices that contains at least one endpoint of every edge of \( G \). The vertex cover number of \( G \), denoted \( \beta(G) \), is the order of a smallest vertex cover. It is well known that for any \( n \)-vertex graph \( G \), \( \beta(G) = n - \alpha(G) \).

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We prove two new upper bounds on the total domination number of a tree in this paper, one of which improves on a 2004 result of Chellali and Haynes [1]. Their result states that the total domination number of an \( n \)-vertex tree is at most \( (n + |S|)/2 \), where \( S \) is the set of support vertices of the tree. Our first main result improves on this inequality since, as it turns out, one may not need all support vertices and the tree should be pruned before using their bound. The statement of our first main result follows.

**Theorem 1.** Let \( T \) be a non-star \( n \)-vertex tree. Then

\[
\gamma_t(T) \leq \frac{n + |S^*(T)|}{2} - \frac{|L(T)| - |S(T)|}{2},
\]

where \( L(T) \) is the set of leaves of \( T \), and \( S(T) \) and \( S^*(T) \) are the sets of support vertices and isolated support vertices of \( T \), respectively.

It is easily seen that the domination number of an \( n \)-vertex graph \( G \) is bounded above by \( \beta(G) \), the vertex cover number of \( G \), and that this upper bound does not hold for the total domination number. However, for \( V_c \) a smallest vertex cover of \( G \), \( G[V_c] \) the subgraph induced by \( V_c \), and \( \beta^*(G) \) the number of isolates in \( G[V_c] \), we show the simple result that \( \gamma_t(G) \leq \beta(G) + \beta^*(G) \) for any graph \( G \) with no isolated vertices. Now, for a tree \( T \), our second main result improves on the latter upper bound by showing that one may not need all of the isolates in \( T[V_c] \). The statement of our second main result is as follows.

**Theorem 2.** Let \( T \) be an \( n \)-vertex tree with \( n \geq 3 \). Then

\[
\beta(T) - (k - 1) \leq \gamma_t(T) \leq \beta(T) + |S^*(T)|,
\]

where \( \beta(T) \) is the vertex cover number of \( T \), \( S^*(T) \) is the set of isolated support vertices of \( T \) and \( k \) is the minimum number of components taken over all subgraphs induced by minimum total dominating sets.

The proofs of these bounds are deferred to the next section of this paper. Theorem 2 provides a sufficient condition for \( \gamma_t(T) = \beta(T) \).

**Corollary 3.** Let \( T \) be an \( n \)-vertex tree. If \( T \) has a minimum total dominating set that induces a connected subgraph and \( S^*(T) = 0 \), then \( \gamma_t(T) = \beta(T) \).

Note that since \( \beta(G) = n - \alpha(G) \), both of the new upper bounds involve the order of the graph and thus both suggest corollaries that provide sufficient conditions for when the total domination number of a tree is at most half its order. In the last section of this paper we note those conditions and present another. We also prove a general lower bound on the total domination ratio of trees.

Lastly, note that the upper bound of Theorem 2 was conjectured by Graffiti.pc, a conjecture-making computer program written by E. DeLaViña. The operation of Graffiti.pc and its complete list of conjectures can be found in [5] and [6], respectively. The upper bound of Theorem 1 is proven as an application of another of Graffiti.pc’s conjectures, which is presented and proved first in the next section.
2 Proofs of bounds on $\gamma_t(T)$

The bound proven next originated as Graffiti.pc’s conjecture number 332 in [6]. The proof of Theorem 1 will follow as an application of this result.

**Theorem 4.** Let $T$ be a $n$-vertex tree with $n \geq 3$. Then

$$\gamma_t(T) \leq \frac{n + |S^*(T)|}{2},$$

where $S^*(T)$ the set of isolated vertices in the subgraph induced by the support vertices of $T$.

Before proving the theorem, we present some definitions needed for the proof. A branch point of a tree is a vertex of degree at least three. Each leaf of a non-path tree has an associated nearest branch point. For any leaf $p$ in a non-path tree $T$, let $d(p)$ be the distance from $p$ to the nearest branch point $v$, and $p = v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_{d(p)}$, $v$ be the unique path from $p$ to $v$ in $T$. Call the path $L_p$ from a leaf $p$ to $v_{d(p)}$ (the last vertex before the nearest branch point) a branch of the tree. Every non-path tree then has exactly as many branches as leaves. Call a branch point $v$ accessible to a leaf $p$ if the unique path from $v$ to $p$ does not contain any branch points besides $v$. It is clear that every non-path tree contains a branch point which is accessible to at least two leaves.

**Proof.** The truth of the statement for small trees is clear, since the relation holds for any tree with radius $r = 1$ on more than two vertices, and also for paths with more than two vertices. Assume the statement is true for trees with no more than $k$ vertices. Let $T$ be a tree with $k + 1$ vertices. Moreover, assume that $T$ is not a path and that $r > 1$, since otherwise we are done. Thus, $T$ has branch points. Let $v$ be a branch point that is accessible to at least two leaves $p$ and $q$. Let $L_p$ and $L_q$ be the branches associated to these leaves. So $L_p$ is the path $p = p_1, p_2, \ldots, p_{d(p)}$, and $L_q$ is the path $q = q_1, q_2, \ldots, q_{d(q)}$. Note that both $p_{d(p)}$ and $q_{d(q)}$ are adjacent to the branch point $v$.

Consider first the case where either of the branches $L_p$ or $L_q$ has three or more vertices, say $L_p$ (that is, $d(p) \geq 3$). Let $T' = T - \{p, p_2, p_3\}$ (that is, the tree induced on $V(T) \setminus \{p, p_2, p_3\}$). Then $n(T) = n(T') + 3$. Since $v$ is a branch point accessible to $p$, $T'$ must be a tree with more than two vertices. Let $S^*(T)$ and $S^*(T')$ be the sets of isolated vertices in the subgraphs induced by the support vertices of $T$ and $T'$, respectively. By induction, $\gamma_t(T') \leq \frac{1}{2}[n(T') + |S^*(T')|]$. Let $D'$ be a smallest total dominating set of $T'$. Since $D = D' \cup \{p_2, p_3\}$ is a total dominating set of $T$, $\gamma_t(T) \leq \gamma_t(T') + 2$. Suppose $|S^*(T')| = |S^*(T)| - 1$. This can happen if no new isolated support vertices are introduced in $T'$. Thus $\gamma_t(T) \leq \gamma_t(T') + 2 \leq \frac{1}{2}[n(T') + |S^*(T')|] + 2 = \frac{1}{2}[n(T) - 3 + |S^*(T)| - 1] + 2 = \frac{1}{2}[n(T) + |S^*(T)|]$. On the other hand, if $|S^*(T)| = |S^*(T')|$, then since $p_2$ is not in $S^*(T)$, some vertex along the branch $L_p$, or perhaps $v$ is now in $S^*(T')$. In this case, put $T' = T - \{p, p_2, p_3, p_4\}$, and observe that $|S^*(T')| \leq |S^*(T)|$. Since $D = D' \cup \{p_2, p_3, p_4\}$ is again a total dominating set of $T$, we have $\gamma_t(T) \leq \gamma_t(T') + 2$. Then $\gamma_t(T) \leq \gamma_t(T') + 2 \leq \frac{1}{2}[n(T') + |S^*(T')|] + 2 \leq \frac{1}{2}[n(T) - 4 + |S^*(T)|] + 2 = \frac{1}{2}[n(T) + |S^*(T)|]$. Now, assume that each of $L_p$ and $L_q$ has two or fewer vertices. By symmetry it is enough to consider the cases where (1) $d(p) \leq 2$ and $d(q) = 1$ or (2) $d(p) = 2$ and $d(q) = 2$.

**Case (1).** Suppose $d(p) \leq 2$ and $d(q) = 1$. Let $T' = T - \{q\}$. Let $D'$ be a minimum total dominating set of $T'$ that contains no leaves of $T'$. Then it is easily seen that
Proof of Theorem 1.

Let $D'$ be the pruned tree formed by deleting all but one leaf from each support vertex of $T$. Then clearly, $n' = n - (|L(T)| - |S(T)|)$, $\gamma_t(T) = \gamma_t(T')$, $|S(T)| = |S(T')| = |L(T')|$ and $|S^*(T)| = |S^*(T')|$. Now, by Theorem 4 and the latter observations we see

\[
\gamma_t(T) = \gamma_t(T') \leq \frac{n' + |S^*(T')|}{2} = \frac{n - (|L(T)| - |S(T)|) + |S^*(T)|}{2} = \frac{n + |S^*(T)|}{2} - \frac{|L(T)| - |S(T)|}{2}.
\]


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Figure 1: $\gamma_t = 14$, $n = 24$, $|S^*| = 4$ and $|L| = |S| = 10$

$D'$ must contain $v$, which, in $T$, dominates $q$. Thus $D'$ is also a total dominating set for $T$, and $\gamma_t(T) \leq \gamma_t(T')$. However, provided $p_2$ exists, it is not an isolated support vertex in $T$ but may be such in $T'$. Therefore, $|S^*(T')| \leq |S^*(T)| + 1$. So, by induction $\gamma_t(T) \leq \gamma_t(T') \leq \frac{1}{2}(n(T') + |S^*(T')|) \leq \frac{1}{2}(n(T) - 1 + |S^*(T)|) + 1 \leq \frac{1}{2}(n(T) + |S^*(T)|)$.

Case (2). Suppose $d(p) = 2$ and $d(q) = 2$. It can be assumed that $v$ is not adjacent to a leaf, that is, $v$ is not a support vertex in $T$. Otherwise Case (1) could be applied. Let $T' = T - \{q\}$. Let $D'$ be a minimum total dominating set for $T'$ that contains no leaves of $T'$. In particular, $D'$ does not contain $q_2$. Since $D = D' \cup \{q_2\}$ is a total dominating set of $T$, we have $\gamma_t(T) \leq \gamma_t(T') + 1$. Since $v$ is not a support vertex (by assumption), $q_2$ is an isolated support vertex in $T$. All isolated support vertices in $T'$ are also isolated support vertices in $T$. Thus, $|S^*(T)| = |S^*(T')| + 1$. So, by induction $\gamma_t(T) \leq \gamma_t(T') + 1 \leq \frac{1}{2}(n(T) + |S^*(T')|) + 1 = \frac{1}{2}(n(T) - 1 + |S^*(T)| - 1) + 1 \leq \frac{1}{2}(n(T) + |S^*(T)|)$.

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Label a path on 5 vertices left to right $0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4$ with 0 and 4 the labels of the endpoints. To see that the bound in Theorem 1 is sharp for infinitely many trees, begin by joining the endpoint of a path on 2 vertices to vertex 1 of the labeled path on 5 vertices. Call the resulting tree $H$. Now for $m \geq 1$, let $T(m)$ be the union of $m$ copies of $H$ and a path on 3 vertices, such that one endpoint of the path on 3 vertices is joined to each of the vertices labeled 2 in the $m$ copies of $H$ (see Figure 1 for $T(3)$). It is easily verified that for $m \geq 1$, $\gamma_t(T(m)) = 4m + 2$, $n(T(m)) = 7m + 3$, $|S^*(T(m))| = m + 1$ and $|S(T(m))| = |L(T(m))| = 3m + 1$. 

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Theorem 5. Let $G$ be an $n$-vertex graph with no isolated vertices such that $n \geq 2$ and let $V_c$ be a smallest vertex cover of $G$. Then
\[
\gamma_t(G) \leq |V_c| + \beta^*(G),
\]
where $\beta^*(G)$ be the number of isolates in $G[V_c]$.

Proof. Let $I = V(G) - V_c$. Since $I$ is a maximum independent set, every vertex of $V_c$ must have a neighbor in $I$. Let $D^*$ be a smallest subset of vertices of $I$ that dominate the isolated vertices of $G[V_c]$. It is easily seen that $|D^*| \leq \beta^*(G)$ and $V_c \cup D^*$ is a total dominating set. Thus, $\gamma_t(G) \leq |V_c \cup D^*| \leq |V_c| + |D^*| \leq |V_c| + \beta^*(G)$. 

The lemma below is proven as Lemma 1 in [4]. We use it to prove the lower bound of Theorem 2.

Lemma 6. Let $T$ be a tree with dominating set $V(T) - D$ has at most $k - 1$ edges, where $k$ is the number of components of the subgraph induced by $D$.

Proof of Theorem 2. Let $D$ be a minimum total dominating set. Let $D'$ be a smallest set of vertices in $V(T) - D$ that cover the edges of the subgraph induced by $V(T) - D$. Next put $C = D \cup D'$. Since $C$ is clearly a vertex cover and by Lemma 1 we see $|D'| \leq k - 1$, it follows that $\beta(T) \leq |C| \leq (k - 1) + \gamma_t(T)$.

To show the upper bound, let $I$ be a maximum independent set containing the leaves of $T$. Then $\alpha(T) = |I|$ and $V_c = V - I$ is a vertex cover for $T$. Observe that by choice of $I$ the support vertices $S$ of $T$ are contained in $V_c$. We can assume that $T[V_c]$ has at least one isolated vertex, say $x^*$, that is not a support vertex, otherwise the result follows from Theorem 5.

Next we will partition the vertices of $T$ as follows. Let $L_1 = \{x^*\}$ and $L_2 = N(x^*)$ (we can visualize that the tree is rooted at $x^*$). Observe that $L_1 \subseteq V_c$ and $L_2 \subseteq I$. Now let
\[
L_3 = [N(L_2) - L_1] \cup C_{N(L_2)-L_1},
\]
where $C_{N(L_2)-L_1} = \{v \in V_c|v \text{ is in a component of } V_c \text{ with a vertex of } N(L_2) - L_1\}$. In other words, $L_3$ contains the neighborhood of $L_2$ not already placed into a block of our partition and also the vertices of all components of $V_c$ that contain these neighbors (see Figure 2 for an illustration of the partitioning). Next we put $L_4 = N(L_3) - L_2$ and observe that $L_4 \subseteq I$, since $L_3 \subseteq V_c$.

We continue this process so that at some odd number step $2k + 1$, we put
\[
L_{2k+1} = [N(L_{2k}) - L_{2k-1}] \cup C_{N(L_{2k})-L_{2k-1}},
\]
where $C_{N(L_{2k})-L_{2k-1}} = \{v \in V_c|v \text{ is in a component of } V_c \text{ with a vertex } N(L_{2k}) - L_{2k-1}\}$, and we put $L_{2k+2} = N(L_{2k+1}) - L_{2k}$. Since $T$ is a finite tree, this process will terminate at some $m^{th}$ step where $m$ is even and composed only of leaves. This partition \{$L_1, L_2, \ldots, L_m$\} of $V(T)$ clearly has the following properties.

a. $I = L_2 \cup L_4 \cup \ldots \cup L_{m-2} \cup L_m$.

b. $V_c = L_4 \cup L_6 \cup \ldots \cup L_{m-3} \cup L_{m-1}$.

c. For $i > 1$, if $v \in L_i$ has a neighbor in $L_{i-1}$, then it has only one neighbor in $L_{i-1}$.
Now let $D = V_c$. If $D$ is a total dominating set, then the result holds since $\gamma_t(T) \leq |D| = \beta(T)$. Otherwise, we alter $D$ as follows. If $D$ contains isolated vertices of $T[V_c]$ that are support vertices of $T$, then let $D^*$ be a smallest subset of vertices of $I - L$ that dominate these isolated support vertices. Clearly $|D^*| \leq |S^*|$. Put the vertices of $D^*$ into $D$ and observe that

$$|D| \leq \beta(T) + |S^*|.$$  

If $D$ is now a total dominating set, then the result holds since $\gamma_t(T) \leq |D| \leq \beta(T) + |S^*|$. In case $D$ is not yet a total dominating set, we alter $D$ without increasing its order as follows. In decreasing order we visit each $L_i$ with odd index $i$ where $3 \leq i \leq m - 1$. Thus we begin with $L_{m-1}$ and observe that if there is an isolate of $T[V_c]$ in $L_{m-1}$ then it is a support vertex and some vertex of $D^*$ (which we previously added to $D$) is adjacent to it. Now for each non-support isolate $x$ of $T[V_c]$ that is in $L_{m-3}$, if all of the neighbors of $x$ that are in $L_{m-2}$ are dominated by $L_{m-1} \cap D$, then remove $x$ from $D$ and add to $D$ its unique neighbor in $L_{m-4}$, otherwise we leave $x$ in $D$. Continue this way for each odd $i$ in decreasing order. That is in general for $L_i$ where $i$ is odd, if a non-support isolate $x$ of $T[V_c]$ is in $L_i$, and all of the neighbors of $x$ that are in $L_{i+1}$ are dominated by $L_{i+2} \cap D$, then remove $x$ from $D$ and add its unique neighbor in $L_{i-1}$ to $D$. Otherwise we leave $x$ in $D$. This process terminates after $i = 3$. Now if some vertex of $L_2$ is in $D$ then we are done, otherwise remove $x^*$ from $D$ and replace it with one of its neighbors. Note that in either case, $x^*$ will be dominated by $D$.

It is clear that the order of $D$ has not increased, thus, once we show that $D$ is a total dominating set, the result follows. Since $D$ contains all support vertices of $T$ and contains $D^*$, it is clear that the support vertices and the leaves of $T$ are dominated. Moreover, the non-isolated vertices of $V_c$ are in $D$ and thus also clearly dominated by $D$. What remains to be verified is that non-support isolates of $V_c$ and non-leaf vertices of the independent set $I$ are dominated by $D$. Let $x_i$ be a non-support isolate of $V_c$ and suppose that it is in $L_i$, where $i$ is odd and $1 < i < m - 1$. If $x_i$ is not in $D$ (that is it was removed), then its neighbor in $L_{i-1}$ must be in $D$ and thus $x_i$ is dominated by $D$. On the other hand, if $x_i$ is in $D$ (that is it did not get removed from $D$), then at least one of its neighbors, say $y$, in $L_{i+1}$ is not dominated by $L_{i+2} \cap D$. But the vertices of $L_{i+2}$ are in the vertex cover and we have assumed $y$ is not a leaf (since $x_i$ is
not a support), so \( y \) must be adjacent to a vertex of \( L_{i+2} \). Thus, \( y \) must be adjacent to an isolate in \( L_{i+2} \) that was removed from \( D \). But in this case \( y \) must have been placed in \( D \). Now assume \( w \) is only adjacent to isolates of \( V_c \), and let \( z \in V \) be its neighbor in \( L_{j-1} \). If \( z \) is not in \( D \), then \( w \) must be dominated by \( L_{j+1} \), otherwise \( z \) would still be in \( D \).

Figure 3: \( \gamma_t(T_2(2)) = 9 \), \( n(T_2(m)) = 17 \), \( \alpha(T_2(m)) = 10 \) and \( |S^*(T_2(m))| = 2 \)

To see that the bound in Theorem 2 is sharp for infinitely many trees and sometimes better than the bound in Theorem 1, begin with a path \( P_{5m+3} \) on \( 5m + 3 \) vertices for \( m \geq 1 \) and assume that the vertices are labeled left to right \( 0 \rightarrow 1 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 3 \rightarrow \ldots \rightarrow (5m+2) \) with 0 and \( 5m + 2 \) the labels of the endpoints. Now for each vertex of \( P_{5m+3} \) whose label is congruent to 3 modulo 5 or to 4 modulo 5 identify it with an endpoint of a path on 2 vertices. Call the resulting tree \( T_2(m) \) (see Figure 3 for \( T_2(2) \)). It is easily verified that for \( m \geq 1 \), \( \gamma_t(T_2(m)) = 3m + 3 \), \( n(T_2(m)) = 7m + 3 \), \( \beta(T_2(m)) = 3m + 1 \) and \( |S^*(T_2(m))| = 2 \).

3 The total domination ratio of a tree

It is well known that the total domination number of a connected graph is at most two-thirds its order (see [3]). It is also known that there are many trees whose total domination number is equal to two-thirds the order. In this section, we discuss new upper and lower bounds for the total domination ratio of trees. From our first two results we get as a special case that trees with no isolated support vertices have their total domination ratios bounded above by a half.

**Theorem 7.** [3] For any connected \( n \)-vertex graph \( G \) with \( n \geq 3 \), \( \gamma_t(G) \leq \frac{2}{3} n \).

We begin with the conditions suggested by our theorems.

**Corollary 8.** Let \( T \) be an \( n \)-vertex non-star tree with \( L(T) \) and \( S(T) \) the sets of leaves and support vertices, respectively. If \( |L(T)| \geq |S(T)| + |S^*(T)| \), then \( \gamma_t(T) \leq \frac{2}{3} n \).

**Proof.** This follows easily from Theorem 1.

**Corollary 9.** Let \( T \) be an \( n \)-vertex tree with \( S^*(T) \) its set isolated vertices in the subgraph induced by support vertices. If \( \alpha(T) - |S^*(T)| \geq \frac{1}{3} n \), Then \( \gamma_t(T) \leq \frac{2}{3} n \).

**Proof.** This follows easily from Theorem 2.
Inspired by the sufficient conditions provided by Corollaries 8 and 9, Graffiti.pc was queried specifically for such conditions. The next theorem was among its conjectures.

The graph in Figure 4 has total domination number less than half its order, although it does not satisfy either of the conditions presented thus far. However, it does satisfy the condition in the next theorem.

**Theorem 10.** Let $T$ be an $n$-vertex tree with $n \geq 4$.

If $|N(S)| - |S| \geq \frac{n}{2}$, then $\gamma_t(T) \leq \frac{n}{2}$,

where $S = S(T)$ is the set of support vertices of $T$ and $N(S)$ the neighborhood of $S$.

**Proof.** Let $S^*$ be the set of isolated vertices in the subgraph induced by the support vertices $S$ of $T$, and put $S' = S - S^*$. The non-leaf and non-support neighbors of $S$ we denote by $N'(S)$, that is $N'(S) = N(S) - (L \cup S)$. Clearly, $L$, $N'(S)$ and $S'$ are pairwise disjoint and $N(S) = L \cup S' \cup N'(S)$. Next, let $B^*$ be a smallest subset of $N'(S)$ that dominates the vertices in $S^*$; clearly, $|B^*| \leq |S^*|$. Let $N''(S) = N'(S) - B^*$ and observe that

$$N(S) = L \cup N''(S) \cup B^* \cup S'. \quad (1)$$

Moreover, since $L$, $N''(S)$, $B^*$ and $S'$ are pairwise disjoint,

$$|N(S)| = |L| + |N''(S)| + |B^*| + |S'|. \quad (2)$$

Let $A = (V(T) - N(S)) - S^*$. Then by our partition of the vertices of $T$ and (1) it follows that $V(T) - N(S) = A \cup S^*$, and so

$$|V(T)| - |N(S)| = |A| + |S^*|. \quad (3)$$

By assumption and (3) we see

$$\frac{n}{2} \geq |V(T)| - (|N(S)| - |S|) = |V(T)| - |N(S)| + |S| = |A| + |S^*| + |S|,$$

Figure 5: Partition of the vertices in the proof of Theorem 10.
which yields

$$|A| + |S^*| + |S| \leq \frac{n}{2}. \quad (4)$$

Lastly, let $A^*$ be the isolates in the subgraph induced by $A$, and put $A' = A - A^*$. Let $D^*$ be the smallest subset of $N'(S)$ that dominates the vertices of $A^*$. Put $D = D^* \cup A' \cup B^* \cup S$. It is easily seen that $D$ is a total dominating set. Thus, by construction of $D$, the observation $|D^*| \leq |A^*|$, our partition of $A$ and (4), respectively, we see that

$$\gamma_t(T) \leq |D| \leq |D^*| + |A'| + |B^*| + |S| \leq |A^*| + |A'| + |S^*| + |S| \leq |A| + |S^*| + |S| \leq \frac{n}{2}.$$

$$\square$$

Theorem 12 and its corollary provide a general lower bound on the total domination ratio of trees. Theorem 12 uses another result of Chellali and Haynes [2].

**Theorem 11.** [2] Let $T$ be an $n$-vertex tree with $n > 2$. Then

$$\gamma_t(T) \geq \frac{n - |L(T)| + 2}{2},$$

where $L(T)$ is the set of leaves.

**Theorem 12.** Let $T$ be an $n$-vertex tree. Let $m$ be a positive constant such that $m \gamma_t(T) \geq |L(T)|$. Then

$$\frac{\gamma_t(T)}{n} > \frac{1}{m+2},$$

where $L(T)$ is the set of leaves.

**Proof.** Clearly, by inspection, $n > 2$. By Theorem 11, we have $2 \gamma_t(T) \geq n - |L(T)| + 2 > n - |L(T)|$. Now by the choice of $m$,

$$\frac{1}{m+2} = \frac{\gamma_t(T)}{(m+2)\gamma_t(T)} = \frac{\gamma_t(T)}{m \gamma_t(T) + 2 \gamma_t(T)} < \frac{\gamma_t(T)}{|L(T)| + n - |L(T)|} = \frac{\gamma_t(T)}{n}.$$

$$\square$$

**Corollary 13.** Let $T$ be an $n$-vertex tree. Let $m$ be the average number of leaves per support vertex. Then

$$\frac{\gamma_t(T)}{n} > \frac{1}{m+2}.$$
Corollary 13, for instance, implies that the total domination ratio of a pruned tree is more than $\frac{1}{3}$. To see that a ratio of $\frac{1}{3}$ is best possible for pruned trees, begin with a path $P$ on $3m + 2$ vertices with $m \geq 3$. Label the vertices of $P$ left to right so that 0 and $3m + 1$ are the endpoints. Now, identify a non-endpoint of a path on 4 vertices with each vertex of $P$ that is labeled $k \equiv 2(\text{mod } 3)$. Let $T_m$ be the resulting pruned tree; see Figure 6 for $T_4$. It is easy to see that $n(T_m) = 6m + 2$ and $\gamma_t(T_m) = 2m + 2$.

References


